

2003 Annual Report

Clark County Department of Community Development



New home construction.

**There is a time to plan
and, as Nike says, a time
to “Just do it!”** – Richard H. Carson, Director

In 2003 Clark County was still the fastest growing county in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. We grew at 2.4 percent for

the year and now have 372,300 residents. A local newspaper recently attributed this to the fact that “Clark County is perceived by many newcomers as offering lower housing prices and good schools.”

The growth is more than double what the city of Portland and Multnomah County experienced. The 2000 Census also revealed the county was the fastest growing in the state of Washington and in the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan area. The state of Washington reports that the county grew by 8,900 people in 2003. That's 24 people, or about 10 families moving here, every day of the year.

For the 150 employees in Community Development, this means that in 2003 we did

104,412 inspections, completed 3,530 plan reviews, did 1,395 investigations, processed 9,546 permits and fielded 129,766 telephone calls. We undertook 118,883 different regulatory activities that resulted in a record \$491 million in new construction in 2003. That's a 19 percent increase in construction over 2002.

New single family dwelling construction continued to dominate the local construction scene and accounted for two-thirds of all construction valuation. However, there has been a definite trend toward more commercial projects in recent years. ■

2003 Pillar of Economic Development

The Department of Community Development received the “2003 Pillar of Economic Development” award from the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) for our new “90-day Permitting” program.

The department took up the challenge from CREDC and made this program one of the cornerstones of it's new economic development strategy. This means that major economic development projects can go from pre-application conference to actual construction within a 90-day time frame. ■



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*“Clark County is on track to end
the year with \$2 billion in home
sales — more than \$550 million
ahead of what industry observers
had said was a solid, if not superior,
performance in 2002.”*
– The Columbian



Richard H. Carson,
Director

Letter from the director

The Department of Community Development is responsible for helping plan Clark County's future. In doing so, we must balance the need to accommodate population growth and new development with our desire for a great quality-of-life. However, there is a time to plan and, as Nike says, a time to "Just do it!" We have reached that time.

In 2004 the Board of Clark County Commissioners will adopt and update the county's comprehensive plan. That means we are also going to spend 2004 making the plan a reality. We will be working with various public and private urban service providers to make sure there are sufficient roads, water, sewers and power available to develop the thousands of acres of newly created urban area.

We have also worked to get our development review house in order. We won the "2003 Pillar of Economic Development" award from the Columbia River Economic Development Council for our new "90-day Permitting" program. The National American Planning Association invited us to speak about our overall Express Permitting program at their meeting this year in Washington, D.C. This program means we are becoming a technology leader in terms of creating e-government permitting. Our slogan is "Don't stand in line, get online."

In January 2004 we started using the new and improved Clark County Code Title 40. We consolidated all of the county's development regulations into one document, and rewrote it for more consistency and clarity. We also made significant improvements to our final site plan and final plat processes.

Clark County is not only growing in population, but is also growing up as a county. We are seeing a new development trend in the type of projects being built. We used to build homes as a suburb of Portland. Now we are seeing large, employment-generating projects. The Salmon Creek Legacy Hospital, Clark County Amphitheater, and Dollar Tree Distribution Center are all new projects of a scale never seen before. Even the addition in 2003 of big-box retailers like Target, Costco, and Lowes is unusual. All of these helped set a record \$491 million in new construction in 2003.

On a personal note, January 2004 marks my fifth anniversary as director of this department. It is often times a difficult job, but I feel good about where the department is headed. The staff has really embraced the concept of continuous improvement and customer service. In fact, the major complaint I get these days is that some people want us to stop improving things for awhile so they can get used to the changes. Oh well, you can't please everyone.

Richard H. Carson

Richard H. Carson, Director

Process chart: form follows function

The Department of Community Development has 150 employees, a \$26 million biennial budget, and is organized into eight divisions to help us make our work as efficient and productive as possible. Our organizational theory would be "form follows function." In other words, the overall function of regulatory property development — be it a garage addition or a large subdivision — follows a specific path through the organization.

Applicants start by going to the Customer Service Division Permit Center to find out what kind of permits are required. Once an **application** is submitted, it is reviewed for compliance with the county's **planning** and **engineering** requirements. During construction the project field **inspections** are completed.

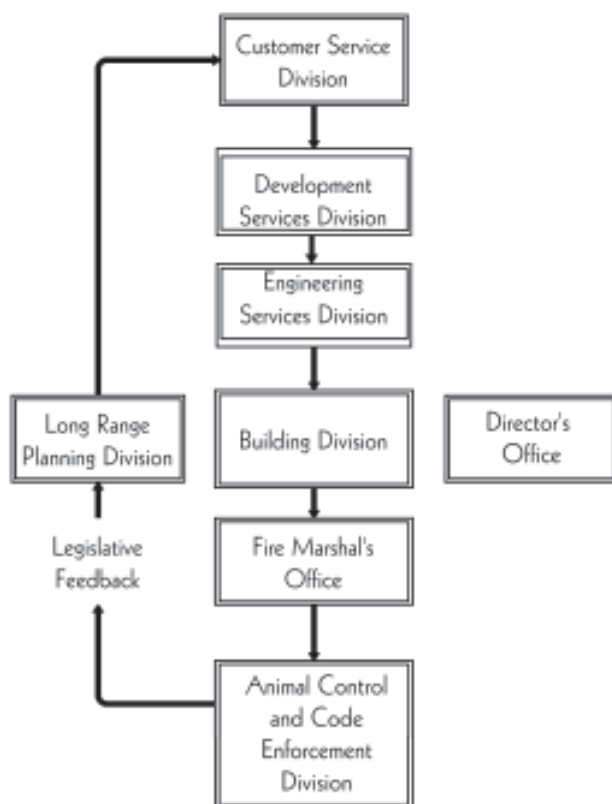
After the project is approved, it's time to get the actual **building permits** and inspections from the Building Division and Fire Marshal's Office. Once constructed, all existing properties

and buildings must continue to conform to the county's regulations and are subject to review by the Code Enforcement Division.

The Animal Control Division performs similar enforcement services and inspections, but focuses on animals instead of property development.

When the Board of Clark County Commissioners decides to change county codes, regulations or the 20-year comprehensive plan, it's time to involve the Long Range Planning Division. Through public outreach programs, Long Range Planning keeps the county rethinking how it does business.

Throughout this cycle, the Director's Office provides both oversight and quality control functions. Our job is to keep working to make the process fair, objective, consistent, and cost-efficient. ■



Community Development basics

Our mission

We implement the community's vision of the future through managed growth, quality construction, and community safety. We preserve community livability, safeguard the public good, and strive to ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

Budget

Community Development's finance program is part of the Administration Division. The program is responsible for the consistent management of the department's financial processes across all divisions. This includes budget, purchasing, fee development, revenue collection and distribution, account maintenance, processing and financial audits. With the limited staff in this program, some responsibilities such as purchasing and budgeting are decentralized and performed within the respective divisions.

The primary function of the finance program is to provide stewardship of public funds. In 2003 Customer Service and Animal Control staff collected and distributed over \$25 million in support services to Development Services, Building, the Fire Marshal's Office, Code Enforcement, Animal Control, transportation, parks, and schools. We must ensure that these funds are collected and distributed in a correct, timely, and secure manner.

Further, we see that those funds remaining in Community Development are spent appropriately. Each year, staff in the finance program carefully determine appropriate expenditures to be supported by fees. As a government agency, we need to make sure that we have enough



Permit Counter staff accepting payment for an application.

revenue to support our programs and ensure the safety and quality of development in the community. At the same time, our fees should not exceed these costs over time.

For 2003-2004 Community Development has a biennial budget of \$26 million supporting 150 full time employees. We also collect over \$5 million annually in impact fees for roads, schools, and parks.

Revenue:

Licenses and Permits	42%
Fees and Charges	34%
Miscellaneous	21%
Intergovernmental	3%
Total	100%

Expenses:

Staff	69%
Supplies and Services	30%
Intergovernmental	1%
Total	100%

Major private sector investments



In 2003, Community Development reviewed 31 projects that we considered major investments. These larger projects make a substantial contribution to the number of lots available for development, the number of feet of floor space available for lease or commercial activity, and the valuation of the county. These photos are a sampling of the 2002 major private investment projects either under construction or completed.



Clockwise: Autumn Walk subdivision, Whipple Creek subdivision, Padden Parkway Market, Hazel Dell Towne Center, Lowe's





*Shari Jensen,
Division Manager*

Customer Service

The Customer Service Division provides for the intake and processing of Land Use, Engineering, and Building applications. This occurs at the Permit Center in the new Public Service Building in downtown Vancouver and at our satellite office in Battle Ground.

Building applications continue to be the majority of our workload, and thus have been the focus of our improvement plan. In 2003, the Customer Service Division implemented several changes to aid the customer, including:

- A pilot program allowing appointments for new applications. We also reorganized the division to include subject matter experts in all aspects of the work we perform. These experts also act as liaisons to carry vital information between divisions,
- Case coordination for case managed projects; implementation of a parallel review system for all building applications allowing work to be done simultaneously, resulting in quicker turn-around times,
- Dedicated training time for all division staff to receive the most updated information on the code and its application as well as procedural changes and interpretations.

These are just the highlights of improvements we have made. We are dedicated to making additional improvements to provide the best possible service.

Plans for the coming year include implementing a fax permitting system for plumbing and mechanical permits. This would allow the applications to be faxed in, processed, and issued without waiting in line. Applicants would only need to see the cashier to pay for and pick up their permits. We see this as a benefit to all customers as it will reduce the wait times not only for these applicants, but for others as well.

In addition, we hope to install the Q-Matic system to check in customers and get them to the most appropriate staff quickly. This is an important component of our work since we serve approximately 1,500 walk-in customers each month in our downtown office. Each month we also serve approximately 1,650 customers over the phone and route about 3,200 customers through the department switchboard. ■

*Staff assisting a
customer in the Permit
Center.*



Development Services

Development Services began its year with a series of roundtable sessions with area development consulting firms. We met with ten of the top firms to discuss our plan review process, receive input, and hear suggestions for change. Overall, firms were very pleased with the way our preliminary plan review process was working and the fact we were meeting 99 percent of our deadlines. We also received great ideas for improvement.

Suggested improvements and our response

Issue report at pre-application conference—

Starting in January 2004, the pre-application conference report will be provided at the conference. If there are outstanding issues that need to be resolved after the conference, staff will follow up by e-mail within the week.

Delete requirement for SEPA checklist at pre-application conference—

Under the county's new Title 40 Unified Development Code, the requirement for a SEPA checklist at pre-application has been eliminated. Title 40 became effective in January 2004.

Create policy to accept incorrect application fees—

Application fees for project review may be paid by check. In the past, applications were rejected if the check was made out in the wrong amount. Community Development now accepts incorrect checks and allows the review process to begin while the differences are resolved.

Make process for pre-application conference waivers easier and quicker—

Development Services has established a new policy where pre-application waivers are issued through e-mail within 14 days of application. This new policy only applies to straightforward applications where the applicant has had previous success with similar projects.

Remove Health Department from the plan review and final plat process—

As of September 2003, new projects not proposing to use potable water wells or septic systems are not required to submit an evaluation letter from the Health Department at the preliminary plan review stage. Also, final plats for those projects will not require the signature of the Health Department. The Health Department evaluation letter will be required upon submittal of final construction plans.

Have staff initiate code amendments for much needed changes—

Beginning January 2004, Development Services will be assigning a planner to develop code changes for consideration by the Board of Clark County Commissioners. This will result in a package of proposed amendments going to the board twice a year. These amendments will only include minor to medium changes to the code, such as clarifying language and inconsistencies, and making changes that take advantage of advances in other jurisdictions and new information.

We would like to thank everyone that spent time with us this year to improve our processes. ■



*Michael Butts,
Division Manager*

*New commercial
development.*





Maureen Knutson,
Division Manager

Engineering Services

2003 was a busy year for the Engineering Services Division. We worked on a number of initiatives to improve process, communications, and efficiencies in the areas of development review, construction inspection, and final approval processing for plats and site plans.

While permit volumes have remained fairly consistent over the past few years, we are finding that the landscape is shifting. Project complexity is increasing as we face the greater challenges of infill development and unusually large projects. Examples include the Amphitheater, Legacy Hospital, Hazel Dell Towne Center, Costco, and the new Expo Center.

One thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to provide service-oriented, open, and professional customer service while protecting the life, health, safety and welfare of the community. Our mission is to ensure quality, reliability, and longevity of public infrastructure and minimize taxpayer expense for maintenance and operations of public stormwater and transportation facilities.

Major Accomplishments in 2003

- Case Management – a new project management approach for large, complex projects. This service is available at additional cost

- to applicants who desire the increased coordination, flexibility, and priority processing of this more intensive service.
- Express Permitting – an expedited, integrated review process for priority economic development projects that allow land use, engineering, and building permit approvals in 90 days or less.
- FEMA's Community Rating System – We successfully demonstrated that the county's Flood Plain Management program qualified for membership in this cost saving system, resulting in a 15 percent reduction in flood insurance premiums for county residents.
- Standard Details – A new resource with over 170 details that will assist in interpretations of the Clark County Code. This will speed engineering design and plan review, while simplifying construction, inspection, and maintenance of facilities.

Major Goals for 2004

- Final plat and final site plan processes – Adopt and implement new process and code amendments to address customer requests for decision timelines and greater process predictability.
- Strategic Plan Update – Assist in the development of a department strategy to deliver programs and services to Clark County residents within a funding structure of reduced general fund support.
- Biennial Focus Group Meetings – Conduct multiple focus group meetings with stakeholders in the development community. Build on existing relationships and obtain input on customer needs and areas to target for continuous improvement.

Utility installation inspection.



Building Division

IVR

After much planning, the installation and implementation of the department's Interactive Voice Recognition System is complete. In one phone call, this system allows customers to request inspections, find out inspection results, leave messages for and retrieve messages from building inspectors, and request permit information to be faxed.

Hazardous Mitigation Team

Immediately after a major emergency, such as an earthquake, local officials generally have no idea how much damage has occurred or how severe the damage is. It takes time for word to come in from the public, building owners, news media, police, and fire department personnel. Consequently, local officials must wait for this information before setting response priorities and determining the need for additional assistance. The Hazardous Mitigation Team created an Emergency Response and Rapid Assessment plan for the Clark County Building Division. This plan will be implemented immediately after a major event.

Structural Engineer

The Building Division hired a structural engineer to streamline the review process. This action eliminates the expense and delay of services associated with contracting for these services. The structural engineer is primarily responsible for assuring the integrity of major structural elements and compliance with current Washington State Codes. The efficiency of review has significantly improved.

Training Program

The building inspectors have enforced the Uniform Building Code since 1970. Recently, the State Legislature passed SHB 1734, updating the State Building Code Act. This allows model codes to be consistent across the United States. The 2003 editions and amendments of the building code have been adopted to become

effective July 1, 2004. This means that the Building Division will need to have the knowledge and understanding of over 10,000 new code changes. The division has implemented a training program with classes twice a week to meet these changes by July 2004. ■



*Lou Adams,
Division Manager.*



*Inspection at the Legacy
Hospital site.*



*David Lynam,
Fire Marshal*

Fire Marshal's Office

2003 was another banner year for the Fire Marshal's Office, which operates from offices in the Public Safety Complex near the fairgrounds and the Public Service Center in downtown Vancouver. Staff met the demands of a 7.3 percent overall increase in activity while supporting a number of major projects that consumed much of the division's time.

In addition to supporting the construction, startup, and operation of the amphitheater during its first year, the Fire Marshal's Office:

- Completed more than 3,900 different reviews, inspections, and investigations,
- Issued more than 5,000 burning permits,
- Answered the phone more than 11,000 times (99.9 percent were either answered directly or returned within twenty-four hours),

- Assisted hundreds of others seeking our services in person.

On more than 20,000 occasions, staff interacted directly with someone needing our services. But everyone who lives, visits, works, shops, or does business in Clark County receives the benefit of our work even though they probably will never see one of our staff members. The Fire Marshal's Office reviews and inspects new commercial construction. Staff make sure that necessary fire and life safety systems are in place and operational before the doors are opened for business or the first tenant has moved in.

Throughout the business day, on weekends, and even into the night, inspectors diligently watch over more than 1,900 of our public buildings. Many of these buildings hold the offices, factories, and shopping centers of our growing economy. Others protect our children in their schools and day care centers, plus the elderly in nursing homes and congregate-care facilities. Those who seek entertainment or relaxation in one of the county's many restaurants and eateries, those who visit movie theaters or attend concerts, and even those who spend an afternoon at the fair, do so safely largely because of the unseen work of our fire inspectors.

The Fire Marshal's Office is the only county agency involved in every stage throughout the "life" of a building. Staff review and approve the initial construction. They inspect it throughout its useful life and assure its safety even when it is being demolished. When something goes wrong, they are there to investigate what happened and use the information to try to prevent it from happening again. Our staff will continue to do all they can to protect the community's public buildings. ■



*Sprinkler system
inspection.*

Long Range Planning

Long Range Planning has is responsible for the county's comprehensive planning, long range transportation planning, and capital facilities planning, and restructuring county development codes. The division provides staffing to the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission.

Comprehensive Plan Review

After completion and release of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement, the Board of Clark County Commissioners narrowed the focus of the ten-year update of the comprehensive plan. From five alternative plan maps they adopted a "preferred" alternative. The focus of the preferred plan heavily emphasizes job creation, mostly by identifying large areas for business and office-type developments. It also pursues a focused public investment strategy to provide infrastructure to job producing lands. Completion of the plan in 2004 will require working with all the public service providers to develop a capital facilities plan that can support the land use plan.

The Annual Docket process was complicated this year by the comprehensive plan update. Approximately 300 individual site-specific requests were submitted since the beginning of the plan update. The Planning Commission heard extensive testimony on a number of requests during the comprehensive plan update hearings and recommended over 20 cases be initiated by the county commissioners for review beginning in early 2004.

Code Restructure Project

A project to combine all land development regulations into a single Clark County Code title was completed in 2003 and is effective January 2004. The new Title 40 Unified Development Code includes all development-related standards and procedures. Part of the effort was to address conflicting and unclear sections of the code, and to correct typos and mis-references. The goal of the project is to make the code

easier to use by staff, development interests, and citizens interested in the development process.

Transportation Planning

We are currently working with the local community on a Highway 99 revitalization project. In addition, we are writing a subarea land use and transportation plan for "Section 30"—a large area with mining activity on the eastern edge of the Vancouver Urban Growth Boundary. Both projects will continue through 2004.

A building moratorium was removed this year from the Salmon Creek area around the 134th Street and I-5/205 interchange. This was achieved because of the adoption of a transportation strategy that lowered the level of service standard, reserved a minimum number of vehicle trips for new job-producing businesses, and added the 139th Street overpass project to the six-year transportation improvement program.

Historic Preservation

The Historic Preservation Commission and county staff worked with the city of Vancouver to shift staffing responsibilities for reviewing new applications within the city limits to city staff. The majority of applications received throughout the county are within the city of Vancouver. Until this year, county staff provided that service, but can no longer afford to do so. This year eight cases were submitted for review and an informational brochure about historic preservation was produced.

Home Occupations

The Rural Enterprises Task Force finished its recommendation for an ordinance dealing with rural home occupations. At the direction of the board, urban home occupations were added so that the proposed ordinance addresses all home occupations. The Planning Commission developed recommendations that will be presented to the board in early 2004.



*Pat Lee,
Division Manager*



*Linda Moorhead,
Division Manager*

Animal Control and Code Enforcement

Animal Control

Clark County Animal Control has gained a more positive image in the community, with local municipalities, other enforcement agencies, and the public. Animal Control enforces the town of Yacolt's dog ordinance and has contracts with the cities of Battle Ground and Vancouver. Animal Control also assists on a case-by-case basis with the cities of La Center and Ridgefield to provide guidance and expertise on the animal-related issues.

Within the last year, Animal Control has taken a strong stance that has targeted danger-

laws (RCW 16.52.015).

With land use zoning regulations becoming increasingly higher density, Animal Control is handling more issues related to smaller lots, such as an increase in animal noise complaints.

After an absence of several years, in 2003 the Southwest Washington Humane Society re-enacted its Humane Education Committee. The committee is made up of citizens, a Humane Society staff coordinator, and an Animal Control representative. The mission is to create, advise, modify, or discover new ways to enhance public awareness of how animals and humans interact.

Animal Control has continued to provide citizens of the county and the city of Vancouver with programs regulating local and state laws pertaining to animals. In addition to picking up stray animals, inspecting facilities, and licensing pets, they have a very effective educational program. Dozens of presentations have been made throughout the year to school-age audiences regarding bite prevention and the care of animals.

Citizens can contact Animal Control on-line with complaints. ■



ous dogs and vicious acts by dogs. A special program was developed to increase public awareness and to assist in enforcement actions. Animal control agencies throughout the state lobbied to change the state's Dangerous Dog Law. One change requires a suspect dog's owner to assume all costs of confinement and control (RCW 16.08.080(4)), moving the burden of such expenses from the taxpayer to the dog owner.

In 2003, state law was changed to define law enforcement agencies and animal control agencies as equal. This means either agency may enforce provisions of the cruelty to animal



Staff making pet licenses.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement has experienced great success in its erosion control program. This year fewer citations were issued for erosion control violations. This demonstrates the commitment to education and training that Code Enforcement officers have given to the erosion control/water quality program. In addition to daily on-site training, they also participate in the Washington State University watershed stewards program, which is a series of presentations for environmental studies.

Code Enforcement continues its abatement program to cleanup junkyards and debris. Funds from fines and penalties are used to pay for a portion of the cleanup fees for those who qualify due to financial hardships or old age. Below are before and after photos of a site where an elderly woman's son moved onto the property to help out when she was suffering bad health. He was in the demolition business and brought his demolition debris, inoperable vehicles, and junk with him, saving him huge disposal fees. Eventually the mother moved to a nursing home and the accumulation of junk increased. Shortly after that, the property also became an RV park for his friends with dilapidated trailers. With the help of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the son was evicted from the property and the property was sold. The new owners have worked diligently to clean up the mess.

Complaints received this year have increased, while the number of resolved cases, or cases that have been closed, has decreased slightly. This can be attributed to the fact that many rural business complaints have been placed on hold pending adoption of a new home occupation ordinance. The home occupation public process is coming to an end and a new

ordinance will be proposed to the Board of Clark County Commissioners in early 2004.

With the opening of the Clark County amphitheater this summer, Code Enforcement



officers were available at every concert, ready to respond to noise complaints from neighboring property owners. If a complaint was received they would perform a

sound study (above) to verify compliance with the approved conditional use permit noise regulations. Because of the citizen involvement during the permit process and the contractor's response to their noise concerns, the amphitheater was successful in achieving its goal of keeping the noise level at acceptable standards.



Photos of site before cleanup and after.

The Management Team

Several years ago Community Development adopted a form of “matrix management” that is widely used in many private industries, including construction, health care, research, and national defense. The key to successful matrix management is that it has to be participatory, have good internal communication, and be collaborative with real mutual trust. It is dependent on both vertical and horizontal communication and authority sharing.



From left: Toby LaFrance, Marlia Jenkins, Kathi Curtis, Marian Anderson

Rich Carson, the director of Community Development, is responsible for department-wide management and administration. Eight “division managers” report directly to him. They manage individual division programs, such as building, planning, and code enforcement. There are also four “administrative managers” who are responsible for department wide functions, such as communications, program development, finance, and personnel. The department’s administrative managers are:

Community Relations. Marian Anderson is the department’s ombudsman. Her job is to work with and sometimes be the advocate for citizens and/or builders who need assistance in resolving issues during the development review process. She is also responsible for making sure we learn from our mistakes. When she identifies an ongoing systemic problem, her job is to permanently fix it. Marian is also the department’s media contact person.

Program Development. Marlia Jenkins is responsible for the department’s strategic planning, performance analysis, and technological systems, and serves as the state legislation coordinator. Because the department’s different processes and programs are intertwined, starting new programs or improving old ones requires cooperation across divisions. Marlia brings staff and managers together to look at services, helping them understand the big picture and how program development needs to be coordinated across divisions.

Finance and Budget. With a biennial budget of over \$25 million, Toby LaFrance understands the department’s financial accountability to the taxpaying public and to the Board of Clark County Commissioners. Toby is responsible for budget preparation, day-to-day cash handling, purchasing, working with state and county auditors, and doing a full range of budget analysis. This means he does everything from overseeing a permit fee refund to establishing annual cost-of-service fees.

Employee Relations. Community Development is a large organization with 150 employees. Kathi Curtis handles such personnel issues as recruitment, performance, progressive discipline, employee recognition, and contract negotiations with three different unions. Kathi provides employee orientations for new employees and ongoing training for current employees. She also works to improve internal communications, oversees the county’s annual Community Pride Design Awards program and provides for the department’s facility planning.

The department’s management team is dedicated to customer service, continuous improvement and cultural change. As Director Rich Carson says, “This is first and foremost a customer service agency, and our customers are both our applicants and the citizens of this county.”

Development activity indicators

	2003	2002
Pre-application conference	289	197
Preliminary plan review		
Short plats	26	21
Short plat lots	63	66
Subdivisions	64	36
Subdivision lots	1878	1492
Total lots	1941	1558
Site plan reviews	69	87
Conditional use permits	10	15
Total land use permits	1523	1285
Final construction review		
Short plats	7	8
Short plat lots	25	26
Subdivisions	26	27
Subdivision lots	980	837
Total lots	1005	863
Site plans	40	54
Drainage projects	34	24
Grading permits	108	77
Final land division		
Short plats	30	26
Short plat lots	89	71
Subdivisions	19	20
Subdivision lots	514	390
Total lots	603	481
Building permits		
Single-family dwelling units	2157	2112
Multi-family dwelling units	251	51
Commercial projects	318	260
Total valuation in millions	491	385
Total building permits	6974	6437

Cycle Time

Community Development staff know that time is money for project applicants. We keep track of the time it takes to process typical applications and use cycle time data as a management tool to improve performance. Compared to other communities, the department has a very good record of processing applications in a timely manner.

Community Development also develops information tools and tips to help project applicants decrease their time in the review process. We take a collaborative approach; recognizing that an efficient, timely process is in the interest of the applicant and the community.

Statistics

For a complete summary of Community Development statistics, go to the Data Library on our web site: www.clark.wa.gov/commdev



Krispy Kreme



New home construction in Autumn Walk subdivision.

“...residential real estate continues at a scorching pace, with buyers wanting to capitalize on low mortgage rates before home prices escalate farther.”

— The Columbian

Making *SOOP*



Ali Safayi receiving a *SOOP* award.

In October 2002, Community Development initiated the **SOOP** program to reinforce our commitment to be **Service-Oriented**, **Open**, and **Professional**. On four different occasions, managers have presented **SOOP** awards to those employees who have demonstrated the most exemplary **Service-Oriented**, **Open**, and **Professional** behavior, one for each category.

Being **Service-Oriented** means that we treat all of our customers with respect, empathy, civility, helpfulness, patience, and responsiveness. That is how we want to be treated when we are customers and that is what we want to deliver to our customers. Recipients of this award are:

- Mary Johnson, MIS Coordinator
- John Paradis, Lead Combination Building Inspector
- Melissa Tracy, Office Assistant III in Engineering Services
- Pam Ogren, Office Assistant II in Code Enforcement
- Teresa Guise, Plans Examiner in Building



Being **Open** is about truly listening to what customers have to say, not prejudging outcomes. We have established several feedback loops over the past two years and are adjusting our process responses. Recipients of this award are:

- Jon Dunaway, Deputy Fire Marshal
- Darcy Hendrickson, Lead Animal Control Officer
- Richard Daviau, Planner II in Development Services
- Vicki Kirsher, Community Development

Specialist in Customer Service

- Dan McNay, Development Inspector in Engineering

The final ingredient in the **SOOP** recipe is being **Professional**. Technical training, a strong work ethic, strong communication skills, objectivity, and being able to work with a team are among the herbs and spices flavoring this ingredient. Recipients of this award are:

- Ali Safayi, Engineer II in Engineering Services
- Alan Boguslawski, Planner II in Development Services
- Derek Chisholm, Planner III in Long Range Planning
- Gary Pierce, Planner II in Customer Service
- Josh Warner, Planner II in Development Services

Managers presented the last awards to three more deserving employees in February 2004. A group of employees are now exploring options for a new program that will reinforce our goal of being the best organization in the region and state.



Customer Service Evaluation

In addition to focus groups, one-on-one conversations, and project-specific surveys, the department has a "How Are We Doing" Survey available to everyone.

The survey is based on questions asked in the 1999-2000 performance audit. Using a scale of one to four, with four as the highest score, the department received an overall service grade of 3.4 (B) in 2003. Service scores ranged from 3.2 (B-) to 3.7 (B+) with 115 people responding. ■

Who are you going to call?

The department established an internal goal to return 95 percent of our phone calls within 24 hours. Each employee, including the director, maintains a telephone log book and reports the statistics monthly. In 2003, the department handled 129,766 phone calls and returned 97 percent of them on time. ■



Outreach Efforts

The Development Services and Engineering Services Divisions have active outreach programs to the development community. Every two years, both divisions conduct focus group meetings with a diverse array of customers including developers, architects, engineers, surveyors, contractors, title companies, realtors, attorneys, and other land development professionals.

In 2003 Engineering Services conducted a series of stakeholder interviews as part of our current effort to re-engineer the final plat and final site plan processes. Development Services recently completed roundtable discussions with 10 area development consulting firms. During 2004 Engineering Services will be conducting 10 focus group meetings with the development community and a similar number with the contracting community. We appreciate these opportunities to hear from our customers and use the feedback from these interactions to make improvements in programs and performance. ■

Promptness of initial greeting: B+

Time spent waiting for service: B-

Courtesy/personal attention: B+

Knowledge level of employees: B+

Efficiency of service provided: B

Useability of information: B+

Overall Service: B

Online Permitting

Online permitting is closer than you think. The department is planning web-based permitting and scheduling of building inspection. Online building inspection requests should be available by the third quarter of 2004. Simple building permit applications should be available in 2005.

Volunteering



Community Development employees along with family and friends take part in the Race for the Cure.

As philanthropy and government funding declined again in 2003, community service organizations continued to face a growing need for their services. Many Community Development employees helped in the effort to successfully meet the

needs of both local and world-wide organizations.

As in past years, the collective charitable efforts of Community Development were many and diverse. Donations were made to the Children's Sharing Project, a county-wide program that benefits Clark County children who might not otherwise receive gifts during the holiday season.

Bi-monthly Red Cross blood drives were well-supported by our employees, who answered the call for blood donations in record numbers. Our collective efforts in the United Way online auction set a new record, raising more than \$700. More than 30 employees participated in the Lee National Denim Day and Race for the Cure for the Susan G. Komen Foundation, both of which proved to be successful fundraising events.

Through the donation of personal time and funds, our employees also supported many other worthy causes benefiting Clark County youth, education, humanities, and the fight against hunger. One employee serves as a trustee for the Hockinson Public Schools Foundation. This group raises funds to help augment property taxes in an effort to increase teaching resources for our children. Another is an active partici-

pant in youth and education organizations serving as a Cub Scout leader and a member of the Burnt Bridge Creek Elementary School's Shared Leadership Team. Promoting our local arts, a Clark County employee sits on the Vancouver Symphony Board of Directors. Another works with the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization to showcase the arts and crafts of various cultures.

In addition, many employees came together in the fight against hunger by serving lunch at the Share House, participating in Meals on Wheels. For the second year in a row the department donated more food than any other department—an incredible 3,000 pounds of food in our annual food drive.

"The collective charitable efforts of Community Development included numerous organizations."

The charitable spirit of Community Development employees not only benefits those in our local community but also touches individuals in need worldwide. In cooperation with three Clark County agencies, care packages were collected and sent to our military troops in Iraq. Another employee served on a committee which raised \$20,000 for the victims of the Iran earthquake. All proceeds were made available to Mercy Corp to provide immediate relief and shelter in Bam.

Finally, an employee was an active supporter of the Mae Tao Burmese Children's Clinic in Mae Sot, Thailand, which provides medical care for refugee children on the Myanmar/Thailand border.

Our employees truly demonstrate what Community Development is all about—people who, without the expectations of recognition, improve our community and the lives of others in need. We remain committed to our community and look forward to another record-breaking year of charitable giving.

Community Pride Design Awards

The Eighth Annual Community Pride Design Awards event was held Wednesday, November 12, 2003.

The awards program was established in 1996 by various public and private organizations within Clark County. It provides a way to recognize outstanding buildings, developments, and civic improvements that have had a positive impact on the community. Out of the 25 nominations received this year, eight were honored for their outstanding and unique efforts in architectural design, community enhancement, public facilities, and residential development. Three additional projects received honorable mentions.

As in the past, community leaders presented the awards to the recipients. Staff from Clark County and the city of Vancouver carried out the numerous activities that need to be accomplished in order to ensure the success of the event.



*Left: Kimball House
Right: Jack, Will and Rob Youth Center
Below: Hockinson High School*



Honorable Mention:

*Amspacher Lincoln
Neighborhood Infill
House*

*New West Vancouver
Batch Plant*

*Ridgefield Community
Park*

Award Recipients:

Clark County Amphitheater
Clark County Public Service Center
Heritage Center
Hockinson High School
Jack, Will and Rob Youth Center
Kimball House
Multimedia Classroom Building, WSU-
Vancouver
Washington State School for the Blind - Ogden
Resource Center

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Web site

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*Code Enforcement
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